

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 EB-07
COME-00 AID-05 /064 W
-----281400Z 087336 /47

R 271711Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4718
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP, GY
SUBJECT: OBSERVANCE OF GUYANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY

REF: GEORGETOWN 1118 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GUYANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS WERE OBSERVED QUIETLY MAY 26. THE PRESIDENT DELIVERED A RADIO SPEECH TO THE NATION EMPHASIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLINE IF GUYANA IS TO ACHIEVE ITS DEVELOPMENT GOALS. THE PRIME MINISTER HOSTED A STAG RECEPTION/LUNCHEON AT HIS RESIDENCE AND THE PRESIDENT HELD AN AWARDS CEREMONY FOLLOWED BY A LARGE RECEPTION IN THE EVENING. EAST INDIAN GUYANESE FIGURED PROMINENTLY AS RECIPIENTS OF AWARDS AND ON THE GUEST LIST FOR THE TWO SOCIAL EVENTS, MAKING CLEAR THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS TO SEEK EAST INDIAN SUPPORT IN THE ELECTIONS NEXT YEAR. END SUMMARY.

1. GUYANESE INDEPENDENCE DAY WAS CELEBRATED QUIETLY AND WITHOUT A MAJOR SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM THIS
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YEAR, ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT ARTHUR CHUNG MADE A RADIO ADDRESS TO THE NATION. BURNHAM HOSTED A STAG RECEPTION AND LUNCH AT HIS GEORGETOWN RESIDENCE FOR CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN INFLUENTIAL GUYANESE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PERSONALITIES. PRESIDENT CHUNG HELD AN EVENING CEREMONY AT WHICH NATIONAL AWARDS FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE WERE GIVEN TO GUYANESE PUBLIC SERVANTS, CULTURAL LEADERS, AND

OUTSTANDING WORKERS IN FARMING, SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING. INTERESTINGLY, THE TWO PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED GUYANA'S HIGHEST AWARD--THE ORDER OF RORIAMA--WERE PROMINENT EAST INDIAN GUYANESE, SASE NARAIN, SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT, AND EDWARD LUCKHOO, GUYANA'S HIGH COMMISSIONER TO INDIA, AS WERE AT LEAST HALF OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THE OTHER AWARDS. FOLLOWING THE AWARDS CEREMONY THE PRESIDENT HOSTED A LARGE RECEPTION ATTENDED BY APPROXIMATELY 700 PEOPLE.

2. THE "NEWS" OF THE DAY WAS THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE GOG HAD PURCHASED THE GEORGETOWN ASSETS OF CABLE AND WIRELESS (REFTEL). THE THEME OF CHUNG'S SPEECH WAS THAT THE GUYANESE PEOPLE MUST "TAKE A FIRM GRIP ON THEMSELVES" AND "ERADICATE INDISCIPLINE."

3. LEADERS OR OFFICIALS OF OPPOSITION PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP) WERE NOTICEABLY ABSENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S RECEPTION AND FROM THE AWARDS CEREMONY AND RECEPTION HOSTED BY PRESIDENT CHUNG ALTHOUGH GOG OFFICIALS HAD TOLD CHARGE THAT OPPOSITION LEADERS HAD BEEN INVITED. APART FROM THE PPP LEADERS, HOWEVER, OTHER PROMINENT AND NOT SO PROMINENT EAST INDIANS ATTENDED BOTH FUNCTIONS. DURING THE LUNCH AT BURNHAM'S RESIDENCE, THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ASKED WHY THE OPPOSITION WAS NOT PRESENT AND HE REPLIED, POINTING AT THE CUBAN AMBASSADOR WHO WAS STANDING A FEW FEET AWAY: "ASK HIM."

4. THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FACT THAT EAST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INDIANS GOT THE TWO HIGHEST NATIONAL AWARDS AND A GOOD PROPORTION OF THE LESSER AWARDS, AND THE INCLUSION OF NUMEROUS EAST INDIANS ON THE TWO GUEST LISTS DID NOT ESCAPE NOTICE OR COMMENT AMONG POLITICAL COMMENTATORS HERE. THE COMMENTS WE HAVE HEARD ARE PERHAPS BEST SUMMARIZED BY A CRYPTIC COMMENT MADE BY THE ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR TRINIDAD FOLLOWING THE AWARDS PRESENTATIONS: "THE DIRECTION OF ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS NOW CLEAR." THAT IS, THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE COURTING EAST INDIANS. BLACKEN

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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